Novena for Faithful Citizenship

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Introduction

Prayer is one of the first steps in acting for justice in our world. This novena, rooted in the biblical tradition and the Church's social teaching, is intended to promote justice and peace in our neighborhoods, our country, and our world.

May this novena help to give hope to the poor who suffer from injustices and hope in your life that you may know the peace of Jesus Christ.

First Day

Opening Prayer

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful

and kindle in us the fire of your love.

Reading

Ps 8:2, 4-10

O Lord, our Lord,

how awesome is your name through all the earth!

You have set your majesty above the heavens!

When I see your heavens, the work of your fingers,

the moon and stars that you set in place—

What are humans that you are mindful of them,

mere mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them little less than a god,

crowned them with glory and honor.

You have given them rule over the works of your hands,

put all things at their feet:

All sheep and oxen,

even the beasts of the field,

The birds of the air, the fish of the sea,

and whatever swims the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Lord,

how awesome is your name through all the earth!

Reflection

How will I praise God today? How will I show respect for others, especially my neighbor or those in my community who are not like me?

Prayer

God of love,

may we grow in our love for you

by respecting the dignity of all people we encounter.

Amen.

Novena Prayer

Immaculate Heart of Mary,

help us to conquer the menace of evil,

which so easily

takes root in the hearts of the people of today,

and whose immeasurable effects

already weigh down upon our modern world

and seem to block the paths toward the future.

From famine and war, deliver us.

From nuclear war, from incalculable self-destruction, from every kind of war, deliver us.

From sins against human life from its very beginning, deliver us.

From hatred and from the demeaning of the dignity of the children of God, deliver us.

From every kind of injustice in the life of society, both national and international, deliver us.

From readiness to trample on the commandments of God, deliver us.

From attempts to stifle in human hearts the very truth of God, deliver us.

From the loss of awareness of good and evil, deliver us.

From sins against the Holy Spirit, deliver us.

Accept, O Mother of Christ,

this cry laden with the sufferings of all individual human beings,

laden with the sufferings of whole societies.

Help us with the power of the Holy Spirit conquer all sin:

individual sin and the "sin of the world,"

sin in all its manifestations.

Let there be revealed once more in the history of the world

the infinite saving power of the redemption:

the power of merciful love.

May it put a stop to evil.

May it transform consciences.

May your Immaculate Heart reveal for all the light of hope. Amen.

-St. John Paul II

Second Day

Opening Prayer

As in Day 1.

Reading

Ps 146:1-8

Praise the Lord, my soul;

I shall praise the Lord all my life,

sing praise to my God while I live.

Put no trust in princes,

in mere mortals powerless to save.

When they breathe their last, they return to the earth;

that day all their planning comes to nothing.

Happy those whose help is the Jacob's God,

whose hope is in the Lord, their God,

The maker of heaven and earth,

the seas and all that is in them,

Who keeps faith forever,

secures justice for the oppressed,

gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets prisoners free;

the Lord gives sight to the blind.

The Lord raises up those who are bowed down;

the Lord loves the righteous.

Reflection

Who are the oppressed in your community? How am I helping them secure justice?

How am I helping to feed and give sight to those most in need?

Prayer

God of Jacob,

strengthen our hope in the Lord.

Help us to keep the faith

by striving for justice in our land.

Give us hearts, hands, and feet to truly reach out to those in need.

Amen.

Novena Prayer

As in Day 1.

Third Day

Opening Prayer

As in Day 1.

Reading

Is 58:2-3, 6-8

[The Lord said]:

They seek me day after day,

and desire to know my ways,

Like a nation that has done what is just

and not abandoned the law of their God;

They ask me to declare what is due them,

pleased to gain access to God.

"Why do we fast, and you do not see it?

afflict ourselves, and you take no note of it?"

This, rather, is the fasting that I wish:

releasing those bound unjustly,

untying the thongs of the yoke;

Setting free the oppressed,

breaking every yoke;

Sharing your bread with the hungry,

sheltering the oppressed and the homeless;

Clothing the naked when you see them,

and not turning your back on your own.

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,

and your wound shall quickly be healed.

REFLECTION

What actions do I perform to please God?

How am I healing the wounds of my community?

Prayer

God of light,

give us the freedom to walk in

the footprints of your Son, Jesus.

Let our light shine out for all to see

by turning to those who call for our help.

Heal our wounds, heal our community.

Amen.

Novena Prayer

As in Day 1.

Fourth Day

Opening Prayer

As in Day 1.

Reading

Deut 30:15-20

Moses said to the people:

"Today, I have set before you

life and prosperity, death and doom.

If you obey the commandments of the LORD, your God,

which I enjoin on you today,

loving him, and walking in his ways,

and keeping his commandments, statutes and decrees,

you will live and grow numerous,

and the LORD, your God,

will bless you in the land you are entering to occupy.

If, however, you turn away your hearts and will not listen,

but are led astray and adore and serve other gods,

I tell you now that you will certainly perish;

you will not have a long life

on the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and occupy.

I call heaven and earth today to witness against you:

I have set before you life and death,

the blessing and the curse.

Choose life, then,

that you and your descendants may live, by loving the LORD, your God,

heeding his voice, and holding fast to him.

For that will mean life for you,

a long life for you to live on the land which the LORD swore

he would give to your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

Reflection

How do I defend the right to life especially of the unborn and those near death? How am I tempted to turn away from the commandments and not support the right to life of all people? How can I overcome that temptation?

Prayer

God of life,

may we protect and defend the inviolable sanctity of human life

from the moment of conception until natural death

with strong voices, gentle hands, and loving hearts.

Amen.

Novena Prayer

As in Day 1.

Fifth Day

Opening Prayer

As is Day 1.

Reading

1 Cor 11:26-29

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself.

Reflection

How is the Eucharist central in my life? My community?

Where do I reach out to the body of Christ in my community?

Prayer

Lord,

we come together at the Eucharist to celebrate

your death and resurrection.

Help us experience authentic worship.

Help us grow in awareness of each person's dignity,

and increase our sensitivity to injustices.

Guide us to seek ways to redress them.

Amen.

Novena Prayer

As in Day 1.

Sixth Day

Opening Prayer

As in Day 1.

Reading

Mt 5:43-46

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have?"

Reflection

Who do I disagree with? How do I love them?

How do I live up to the definition Jesus provides for living a Christian lifestyle, a life of Christian love?

Prayer

God of peace,

Give us the courage

to be reconciled with our neighbors.

Give us the vision

to truly see what it means to be a Christian

so that peace and justice may rule in our world.

Amen.

Novena Prayer

As in Day 1.

Seventh Day

Opening Prayer

As in Day 1.

Reading

Ephesians 4:1-6

I … urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Reflection

What divisions exist in my community? What structures in society seem unjust?

How am I striving to achieve justice and peace in my neighborhood, church, and nation?

Prayer

God of justice,

we are created in your image.

May we glorify you in all of our actions.

Amen.

Novena Prayer

As in Day 1.

Eighth Day

Opening Prayer

As in Day 1.

Reading

Is 32:15-18

Until the spirit from on high

is poured out on us.

Then will the desert become an orchard

and the orchard be regarded as a forest.

Right will dwell in the desert

and justice abide in the orchard.

Justice will bring about peace;

right will produce calm and security.

My people will live in peaceful country,

in secure dwellings and quiet resting places.

Reflection

How do I recognize the Spirit's involvement in my life in the community?

Prayer

Spirit of God,

fill our hearts with peace

so that we may bring peace to our community.

Amen.

Novena Prayer

As in Day 1.

Ninth Day

Opening Prayer

As in Day 1.

Reading

Mt 5:13-16

"You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."

Reflection

How are you salt for your community?

How do I shine your light for all the community to see?

What deeds am I performing in order to glorify God?

Prayer

Lord Jesus,

you give us your love and your grace

to do great things.

Give us the faith

to shine our light

by walking humbly

and acting justly

before our God.

Amen.

Novena Prayer

As in Day 1.